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RURAL AREAS  
DEVELOPMENT

# RAA NEWSLETTER

February 1969

No. 99

## EXCERPTS FROM THE REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FEBRUARY 3, 1969:

"What I wish to emphasize is that as we consider the problems, as we did this morning in our Urban Affairs Council, the new Cabinet Committee, it was significant to note, and I am sure you noticed this as you checked the press reports, that the Secretary of Agriculture is a member of the Urban Affairs Council. That was at my insistence, at my insistence for two reasons, because we know that the problems of rural America today will be the problems of urban America tomorrow; we know that as life in rural America is less attractive, there is a tendency for people from the farms and from the agricultural America to move into the cities.

"Of course, we also know that when we look at the very thing that I mentioned a moment ago as being an asset, the productivity, the new methods whereby less farmers, less people on the farm can produce more, this means that all of these new developments result in unemployment for farm workers and eventually they gravitate from the farms to the cities.

"So the Secretary of Agriculture is on that particular Council, the Urban Affairs Council, for that reason. But for another reason as well. And the reason is that as we look to America down the road to the end of this century, to the kind of a Nation we are going to be, present projections are that our population will increase from 200 million to 300 million and that 80 percent, possibly even 90 percent of that increase will be in the cities of America.

"It will happen that way unless there is a change with regard to life in rural America."

In discussing the "problems of rural America as they relate to urban America," President Nixon recalled that, when he asked Secretary Hardin to become Secretary of Agriculture, "over half of the discussion was on this great, exciting mission which this Department and other departments in the Government in support of this Department must work on: That is to look at rural America--the 50 million people who live in what is called 'Rural America'--to deal with its problems in just as an effective a way and with the same sense of urgency that we deal with the problems of urban America."

## AREA PLANNING AND CONSERVATION SERVICES TO COMMUNITIES RISING

Soil Conservation Service assistance to communities and project areas was up dramatically in 1968 over a year earlier.

Among highly urbanized areas receiving SCS assistance in land-use planning and development are several of New York's "bedroom communities" which nudge the boundaries of the metropolis -- Westchester County, Nassau, and Rockland. These communities are using soil survey information in site selection and in solving other land development problems such as controlling accelerated surface water runoff and erosion.

Massachusetts now has more than 200 town conservation commissions cooperating with the state's 14 soil and water conservation districts. Hanover's Master Plan cites SCS assistance; Norfolk used soil survey information and resource inventory maps as did Amherst, Sherborn, West Springfield, Topsfield, and Acton.

The new-town communities of Reston, Virginia and Columbia Maryland are cooperating with their local conservation districts and SCS in developing and carrying out soil and water resource plans.

The February 1969 issue of "Soil Conservation," Vol. 34, No. 7, monthly periodical of the Soil Conservation Service gives an excellent review of Resource Conservation and Development project (multi-county) progress and summarizes the agency's accomplishments in all areas of service -- both new as well as traditional -- for the past fiscal year.

Copies are available upon request from the Editor, RAD Newsletter, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

## FARMERS BECOME INLAND FISHERMEN -- CATFISH BOOM

Fishing in the farm pond for an estimated 3,600 southern farmers is no longer a respite from work. It is a profitable farm enterprise.

Catfish farming runs into a multi-million dollar farm business in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

Annual production of catfish totals a thumping 20 million pounds. And processors anticipate an increasingly widening market and production of the product.

A typical catfish farm maintains about 20 acres of surface water distributed among eight ponds of one to four acres in size.

Production per acre ranges between 1,200 and 1,600 pounds a year with net returns to the producer of \$70 to \$250 or more an acre. Customers pay about 90 cents a pound at retail or from \$2 to \$5 a plate for a complete catfish dinner out.

## RURAL PROSPECTS PRESENTED AT NATIONAL OUTLOOK CONFERENCE

"Rural Change in the 1960's," "Response of Our Institutions to Changes in Rural Life," "New Programs in Rural Housing," "New Methods in Farmhouse Construction," and "The Changing Income Distribution" are some of the topics to be presented by distinguished economists and other authorities at the National Agricultural Outlook Conference, February 17 - 19.

Papers on the above subjects, which reflect the progress being made in rural areas, are available upon request to the Editor, RAD Newsletter, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

## TREES OFFER PARTIAL SOLUTION TO URBAN NOISE AND AIR POLLUTION

Forest Service research is finding ways to use trees and plants in helping cities deaden noise and detect air pollutants.

Scientists know that shelter belts of trees and shrubs can effectively absorb and block the noise assaults of a mechanized society. Research is identifying the best species of trees and planting patterns to achieve maximum noise reduction in cities and along highways.

Trees are sensitive to pollutants in the air. Exceedingly sensitive trees may become permanent detectors of mounting pollution levels. More resistent varieties may help to absorb pollutants and improve the quality of the air we breathe.

## PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST FROM USDA

A USDA Economic Research Report, "Open Space -- Its Use and Preservation," MP No. 1121, discusses problems related to maintaining open land in the midst of the sometimes short-sighted rush to develop land to meet expanding population needs. The report provides a definition of open space and offers some basic considerations on potential uses of land threatened by less attractive forms of development.

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The Economic Research Service recently published AER No. 144, "Status of Rural Housing in the United States," a report of interest to those concerned with the quality and direction of rural development. Some of the basic Census data used are necessarily of 1960 vintage. However, the report still provides a concise and informative review of what remains, despite progress, one of the nation's most urgent rural problems -- inadequate housing.

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The Economic Research Service reports in its publication, "Availability and Use of Health Services...Rural-Urban Comparison," AER No. 139, that there are over 50 percent more physicians per 100,000 persons in urban areas than in rural areas, according to the most recent statistics available. This is one of many comparisons noted in the 26-page report. Selected references on the subject are also cited.

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Forest Service recently revised its brochure, "Forests in Rural Areas Development," PA-494. The publication briefly discusses jobs, businesses and industrial opportunities, recreation and other multiple-use benefits of the Nation's woodlands. Detailed publications on more specific aspects of the role forests play in rural areas development are offered at appropriate points in the brochure.

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The "USDA at Work in Northern New Mexico," is a collection of short descriptions of how Department efforts are assisting rural New Mexicans to improve their incomes, nutrition and job opportunities, and to expand the economies of their communities. These success stories will be of special interest to rural development workers in the southwestern United States.

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The National Agricultural Library recently released an extensive list of references of value to all those engaged in rural areas development work. Entitled "Non-Urban Patterns of Land Utilization, 1963-1968," (Library List No. 93), it presents a selected bibliography of references on current and projected patterns of non-urban land utilization and the effects of these patterns on rural growth, transportation, land values, public lands, forest resources, natural resource conservation and regional planning.

It includes land utilization periodical literature published between January 1965 and May 1968, and books published between 1963 and May 1968. Call numbers are cited in instances where the literature is available from the National Agricultural Library in Washington, D.C.

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Single copies of the above publications are available from the RAD Newsletter upon request to: Editor, RAD Newsletter, Office of Information, Room 458-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. The supplies are limited.